W.i.t.C.h.
#28
P75
October-November 2004
Will Irma Taranee Cornelia Hay Lin
Orube's mission: revealed!
Meet the Lord of Arkhanta
Throw a rockin' HALLOWEEN PARTY!
So close, yet so far
© Disney
ISSN 1594-0403
SUMMIT

So close,
yet so far away
"Something within Ari snapped.
He became a different person"

YOU CAN RUN. YOU CAN HIDE. YOU CAN EVEN FLY TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD. BUT IT'S USELESS...

...WHEN BAD LUCK COMES LOOKING FOR YOU, IT ALWAYS KNOWS WHERE TO FIND YOU.
LOST?
WHAT... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

HE MEANS IT'S VANISHED! IT'S GONE! IT'S ENDED UP WHO KNOWS WHERE!
BUT THAT'S MY SUITCASE! ALL MY CLOTHES ARE IN THERE!

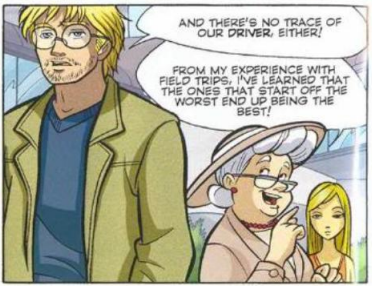
I'M SORRY, MISS HALE! THESE THINGS HAPPEN... B-BUT WE'LL FIND IT IN A COUPLE OF DAYS! YOU'LL SEE!

...AND WE'LL BE SURE TO DELIVER THEM TO YOU AT REDSTONE ACADEMY!
WRITE DOWN THE ADDRESS AND MAKE SURE YOU DON'T GET IT WRONG! MY FRIEND'S VINDICTIVE!

AND... ER... WELCOME TO PORT NELSON!

DON'T WORRY! WE'LL LEND YOU SOME OF OUR STUFF!
THANKS... BUT I JUST CAN'T GET OVER THIS! I'M FURIOUS!

WELL, CORNELIA?
NO LUCK, MS. KNICKERBOCHER! NO TRACE OF MY LUGGAGE!


AND THERE'S NO TRACE OF OUR DRIVER, EITHER!
FROM MY EXPERIENCE WITH FIELD TRIPS, I'VE LEARNED THAT THE ONES THAT START OFF THE WORST END UP BEING THE BEST!

THEN THIS ONE'S GOING TO BE FANTASTIC!
LOOK! DOWN THERE! MAYBE THAT'S HIM!

EXCELLENT POWERS OF OBSERVATION, MR. TUBBS!
PANT...
HELLO, FOLKS... SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING!
SHEFFIELD INSTITUTE

I TOOK A WRONG TURN TWICE ON MY WAY HERE! UNBELIEVABLE, HUH?
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT A JUNGLE IT IS OUT THERE, WITH ALL THOSE SIGNS!
SHEFFIELD INSTITUTE

TUNK!
TOW INSTITUTE
ARGH!
AND THEN, ALL THOSE CARS! I'VE NEVER SEEN THE TRAFFIC IN HEATHERFIELD, BUT I'M SURE IT CAN'T BEAT OURS!

UM... YOUR STORY IS QUITE INTERESTING, SIR... BUT WHAT DO YOU SAY WE GET GOING?
OH, OF COURSE, OF COURSE! FOLLOW ME! OUR BUS IS DOWN THERE! I TRIPLE PARKED IT!
APPLEHOLME COLLEGE
RS

GOOD THING THEY DIDN'T TOW IT AWAY! IT'S FIFTEEN KILOMETERS TO THE ACADEMY, AND IT'D BE QUITE A HIKE! HE! HE! HE!
WHERE DID THEY FIND THIS GUY?

I IMAGINE YOU'RE ALL MIGHTY TIRED! REDSTONE ISN'T EXACTLY AROUND THE CORNER FOR YOU FOLKS!
WELL, WITH THE LONG FLIGHT AND THE JETLAG, WE'RE BEAT! I CAN'T WAIT TO GET SOME SLEEP...

BUT ONLY AFTER WE'VE MET OUR HOST, PRINCIPAL BULLFORD!
"PITBULL" BULLFORD, AS THE KIDS DOWN AT THE ACADEMY WOULD SAY!

I DON'T THINK IT'S APPROPRIATE FOR YOU TO SUGGEST SUCH NICKNAMES TO MY STUDENTS, SIR...
...AND BETWEEN US, YOU SHOULDN'T SPEAK LIKE THAT ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYER, IF I MIGHT ADD!
OH, NOW! PITBULL'S GOT A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOR...

...BECAUSE, YOU SEE, I AM PITBULL BULLFORD!
OH!

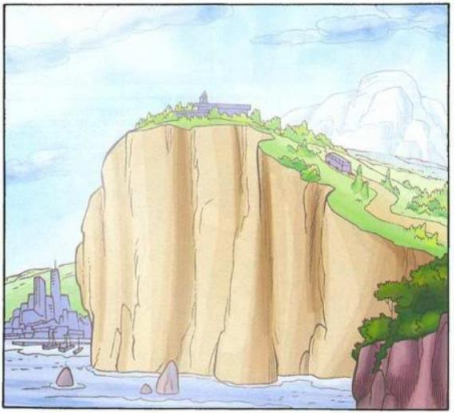
I ALWAYS FORGET TO INTRODUCE MYSELF! YOU MUST BE MS. KNICKERBOCHER, I PRESUME...
I... I HAD NO IDEA! I COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN THAT...! DIDN'T MEAN TO...

YOU'RE BLUSHING, MA'AM!
WELL, THEY HAVEN'T FINISHED EMBALMING ME YET, YOU KNOW!

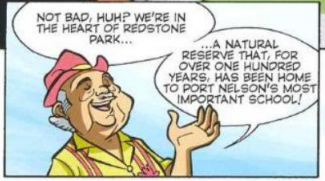
DON'T WORRY, MA'AM! I'M SURE A COUPLE OF WEEKS AT REDSTONE WILL HELP LIVEN YOU UP!

MY SCHOOL'S A SPECIAL PLACE...

"...YOU'LL SOON SEE FOR YOURSELVES!"



WOW! THIS PLACE IS INCREDIBLE! I LIKE IT ALREADY!
MAN! COMPARED TO THIS, SHEFFIELD LOOKS LIKE A BROOM CLOSET!


NOT BAD, HUH? WE'RE IN THE HEART OF REDSTONE PARK...
...A NATURAL RESERVE THAT, FOR OVER ONE HUNDRED YEARS, HAS BEEN HOME TO PORT NELSON'S MOST IMPORTANT SCHOOL!

CAN I TAKE A FEW PICTURES FOR THE SCHOOL PAPER?
GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT, COURTNEY! WRITE DOWN EVERYTHING, BESS!

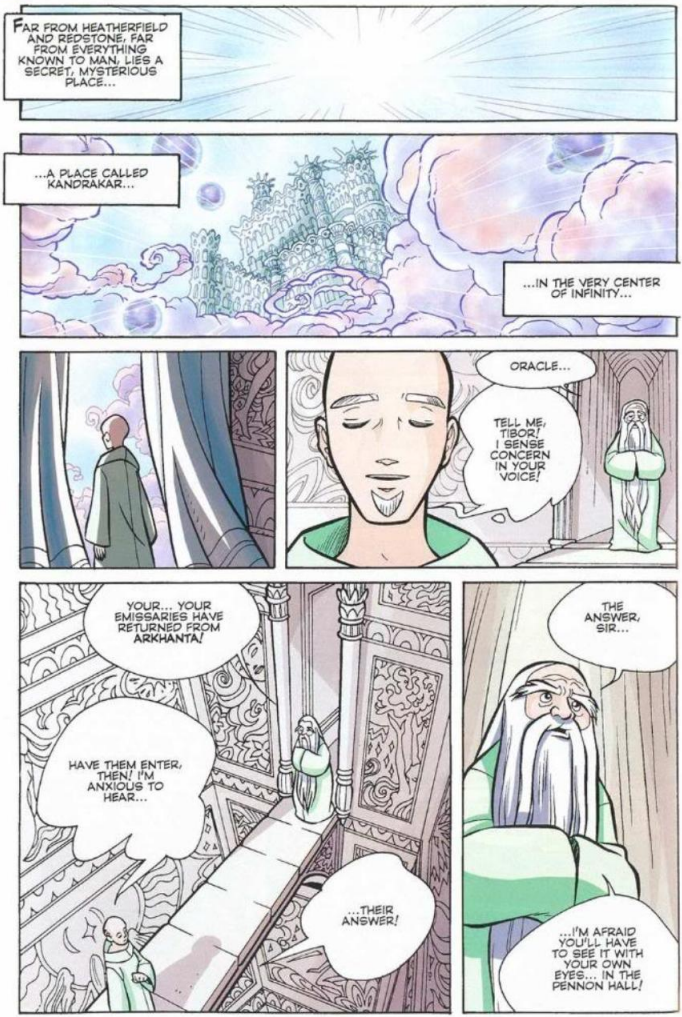
YOU CAN GET TO KNOW MY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TOMORROW! I HOPE YOU'LL FEEL RIGHT AT HOME HERE!

NOT ONLY DOES MY SCHOOL HAVE CLASSROOMS, BUT IT ALSO HAS ULTRA-MODERN LABS, LIBRARIES...

WELL, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WRITE DOWN EVERYTHING...
...GYMS, SWIMMING POOLS, TENNIS COURTS, A THEATER, A CINEMA, NOT TO MENTION COMFORTABLE APARTMENTS FOR THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS!
I WANT TO TELL IRMA EVERYTHING! CAN WE CALL HER?
BUT SHE'LL BE SLEEPING! WHEN IT'S DAYTIME HERE, IT'S NIGHTTIME BACK IN HEATHERFIELD!
YOU COULD ALWAYS SEND YOUR FRIEND AN EMAIL!
"EACH ROOM COMES COMPLETE WITH A COMPUTER!"
TELL ME I'M DREAMING!
I NEVER WANT TO GO BACK HOME! I NEVER WANT TO GO BACK HOME!
YOU'RE SMILING, CORNELIA! IS YOUR MOOD TAKING A TURN FOR THE BETTER?
HMM... YEAH... I GUESS IT IS!

AND SO, THE NEXT DAY IN HEATHERFIELD...
AN EMAIL? WHAT DID IT SAY?
SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE HAVING THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES! HAY LIN'S GOING TO SEND YOU A POSTCARD!
THEY SAY THEY'RE HOPING TO FIND TIME TO GO TO CLASSES... BETWEEN TRIPS TO THE POOL!
OH, REALLY? WELL, IF THEY'RE TRYING TO MAKE ME GREEN WITH ENVY, THEY'RE WASTING THEIR TIME!
WE CAN GET BY WITHOUT THEM! AND WE DON'T NEED THEIR OLYMPIC-SIZED POOLS! I DON'T NEED TO GO HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD JUST TO GO FOR A SWIM!
SHAWAASH
UM...
...GO AHEAD AND CRY IF YOU WANT! WITH ALL THIS RAIN, NOBODY WILL NOTICE A FEW TEARS!
WILL...
I'D LIKE TO BE ALONE WITH MY DIGNIFIED SUFFERING, PLEASE!

MAX9075


FAR FROM HEATHERFIELD AND REDSTONE, FAR FROM EVERYTHING KNOWN TO MAN, LIES A SECRET, MYSTERIOUS PLACE...
...A PLACE CALLED KANDRAKAR...
...IN THE VERY CENTER OF INFINITY...
ORACLE...
TELL ME, TIBOR! I SENSE CONCERN IN YOUR VOICE!
YOUR... YOUR EMISSARIES HAVE RETURNED FROM ARKHANTA!
HAVE THEM ENTER, THEN! I'M ANXIOUS TO HEAR...
...THEIR ANSWER!
THE ANSWER, SIR...
...I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE TO SEE IT WITH YOUR OWN EYES... IN THE PENNON HALL!

BACK!
S-STAND BACK!
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE AFRAID! I DON'T MEAN TO HARM YOU!

DON'T TOUCH ME!

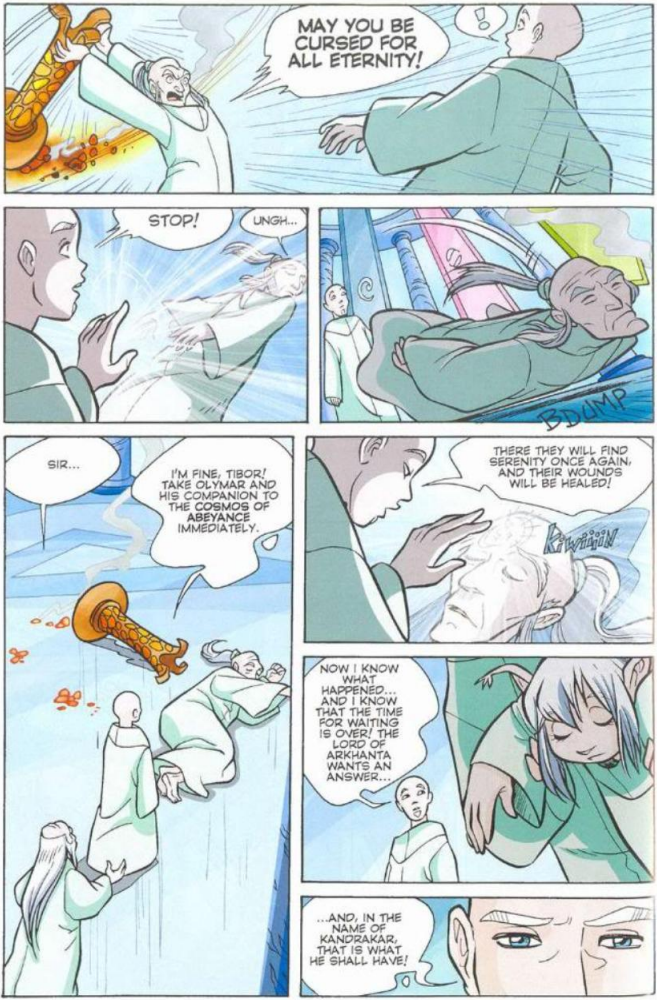
SKRANG

WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
IT'S SOME KIND OF MENTAL TRAUMA, SIR! THEY'RE TERRIFIED!
IN THE WORLD OF ARKHANTA, SOMETHING... OR SOMEONE... REDUCED THEM TO THIS STATE!

OLYMAR... DO YOU RECOGNIZE ME? DO YOU REMEMBER ME?
!

THAT VOICE... IT'S THE ORACLE!

MY DEAR OLYMAR... LET ME RELIEVE YOU OF YOUR ANGUISH! I'M YOUR FRIEND.
NO! YOU... YOU'RE THE CAUSE OF EVERYTHING!


MAY YOU BE CURSED FOR ALL ETERNITY!
!
STOP!
UNGH...
BDUMP
SIR...
I'M FINE, TIBOR! TAKE OLYMAR AND HIS COMPANION TO THE COSMOS OF ABEYANCE IMMEDIATELY.
THERE THEY WILL FIND SERENITY ONCE AGAIN, AND THEIR WOUNDS WILL BE HEALED!
KRYPTAL
NOW I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED... AND I KNOW THAT THE TIME FOR WAITING IS OVER! THE LORD OF ARKHANTA WANTS AN ANSWER...
...AND, IN THE NAME OF KANDRAKAR, THAT IS WHAT HE SHALL HAVE!

THE ORACLE!
GUARDIANS OF THE FORTRESS... I SUMMON YOU!
OH NO!
AH!
!

DRILLING
WHEW! THE END OF CLASS! SAVED BY THE BELL!
IRMA!
2 B
I WAS JUST COMING TO FIND YOU! SHOULD WE LEAVE RIGHT AWAY?
YEAH, BUT LET'S GO UP TO THE ATTIC! OUR SECRET HIDEAWAY IS A BIT CROWDED!
THE ORACLE'S REALLY ENJOYING THESE SURPRISE MEETINGS!
BUT WE'LL HAVE TO STOP BY REDSTONE TO GET THE OTHERS!
IT'S TIME TO FIND OUT IF LONG-DISTANCE TRANSPOSITION WORKS! WHAT IF IT DOESN'T?
IT ALL DEPENDS ON OUR CONCENTRATION! BUT IN CASE SOMETHING GOES WRONG...
...WE'LL LEAVE OUR ASTRAL DROPS BEHIND!
YOU STILL TRUST YOUR DOUBLE, AFTER EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED?*

*REMEMBER W.I.T.C.H. #23?

I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE... BESIDES, THIS TIME YOUR ASTRAL DROP IS GOING TO KEEP AN EYE ON HER!

AFTER SCHOOL, THE TWO OF YOU WILL HAVE LUNCH AT MY PLACE, AND YOU'LL STAY THERE TILL MY MOM GETS HOME!
OKAY... WILL!

I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG WE'LL BE AWAY! DON'T CAUSE ANY TROUBLE, GOT IT?
GET BACK DOWNSTAIRS! THE NEXT CLASS IS GOING TO START SOON!

NOW IT'S OUR TURN! YOU READY?
HOW ARE WE GOING TO MANAGE TO FIND THE OTHERS?
WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT REDSTONE!

ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS THINK REALLY HARD ABOUT OUR FRIENDS... AND WITH A BIT OF LUCK, WE'LL MAKE IT! IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT OVER THERE, SO NOBODY WILL NOTICE US!
YOU'RE THE BOSS, WILL...

USING THE MAGIC OF TRANSPOSITION, WILL AND IRMA LEAVE HEATHERFIELD BEHIND...

WHAAAAREE

...AND AFTER A MOMENT THAT LASTS AN ETERNITY...

...THEY ARRIVE SAFE AND SOUND ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD, IN REDSTONE!

BWAMP

WE MADE IT!

TELL THE TRUTH... YOU DIDN'T THINK WE'D MAKE IT, DID YOU?

THE GIRLS ARE STILL SLEEPING!

ROOON ZZZ ROOON

AND LISTEN TO THEM SNORE! I BET THAT'S CORNELIA! BEHIND THAT DELICATE FACADE LIES A REAL LUMBERJACK!

JEEZ! SHE SNORES LOUDER THAN MY DAD! WHAT DO YOU SAY WE WAKE HER UP WITH A TWO-PILLOW SALUTE?

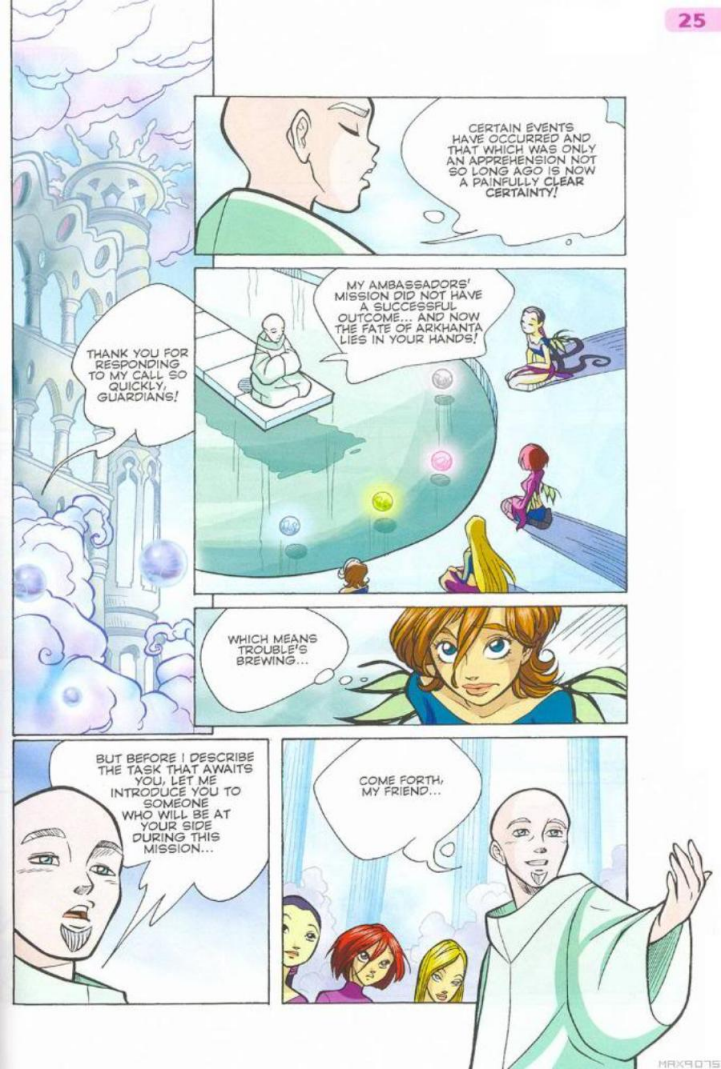
ROOON

I'D SAY THAT'S A TERRIBLE IDEA...

ROOON ZZZ

RROONN...RRR...
...BECAUSE IT'S MS. KNICKERBOCKER!
AHHHH!
DON'T SHOUT! IF ANYBODY CATCHES US, WE'RE DEAD!
WE GOT THE WRONG ROOM! WHAT A TERRIFYING THING TO SEE! GET ME OUT OF HERE! GET ME OUT! GET ME OUT!
SO NOW WHERE DO WE GO?
YOU AND YOUR TRANS-POSI-TION!
I KNEW THIS WASN'T GOING TO WORK!
!
IRMA! WILL! WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE IN THE HALLWAY?
SEE?
IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU, GUYS! IT WAS EASY TO GET HERE!
THAT'S NOT TRUE! IT WAS A DEVASTATING EXPERIENCE! ... I HAVE TO REGAIN MY STRENGTH!
COULD I HAVE A GLASS OF WATER? AND A PIECE OF CHOCOLATE? A SANDWICH?
YOU CAN RELAX IN KANDRAKAR! THEY'RE WAITING FOR US!

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED YOUR MIND, TARANEE?
NOPE! SAY HI TO THE ORACLE FOR ME, WHEN YOU SEE HIM!
OUR ASTRAL DROPS WILL KEEP YOU COMPANY!
ACTUALLY, I'M GOING BACK TO SLEEP... AND THEY SHOULD DO THE SAME!
GOOD LUCK, GUYS!
SEE YOU, TARANEE!


CERTAIN EVENTS HAVE OCCURRED AND THAT WHICH WAS ONLY AN APPREHENSION NOT SO LONG AGO IS NOW A PAINFULLY CLEAR CERTAINTY!
MY AMBASSADORS' MISSION DID NOT HAVE A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME... AND NOW THE FATE OF ARKHANTA LIES IN YOUR HANDS!
THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING TO MY CALL SO QUICKLY, GUARDIANS!
WHICH MEANS TROUBLE'S BREWING...
BUT BEFORE I DESCRIBE THE TASK THAT AWAITS YOU, LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO SOMEONE WHO WILL BE AT YOUR SIDE DURING THIS MISSION...
COME FORTH, MY FRIEND...

COME FORTH AND GREET YOUR NEW COMPANIONS, ORUBE!
ARE YOU SURPRISED?
WELL... ACTUALLY, YEAH!
THERE ARE FIVE GUARDIANS! IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY, AND SO IT WILL ALWAYS BE!
TARANEE'S DECISION PAINS ME, YET THE POWER OF THE GUARDIANS MUST NEVER BEEN WEAKENED!
FWOOMP
ORUBE DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER OF FIRE, BUT SHE IS A SKILLED WARRIOR! SHE WAS ONE OF LUBA'S PUPILS...
THE FINEST OF THEM ALL!
WELCOME ABOARD, THEN!
WHAT IS OUR TASK, SIR?

FOLLOW ME... AND LEARN WHAT AWAITS YOU BEYOND THE GATES OF KANDRAKAR...

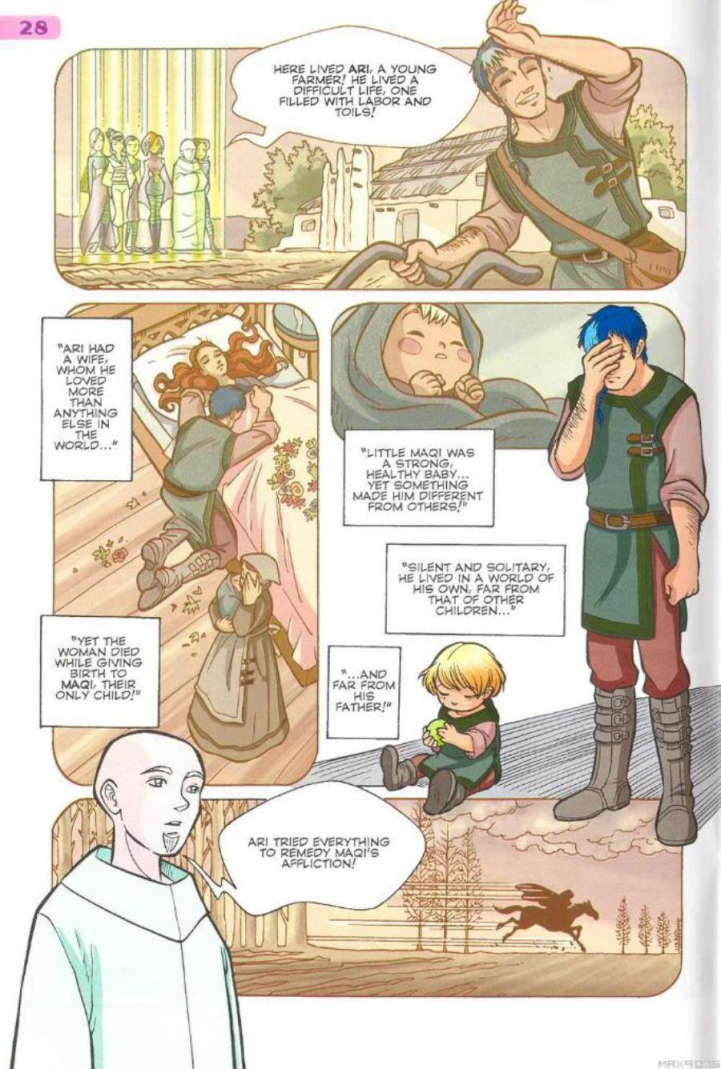
WITH HER IN THE GROUP, WE'LL HAVE TO CHANGE OUR NAME!
RIGHT! WITHOUT TARANEE'S INITIAL, WE'RE NOT W.I.T.C.H. ANYMORE!

WE COULD CALL OURSELVES THE "FRIENDLY FOUR." WHAT DO YOU THINK?
BUT THERE AREN'T FOUR OF US!

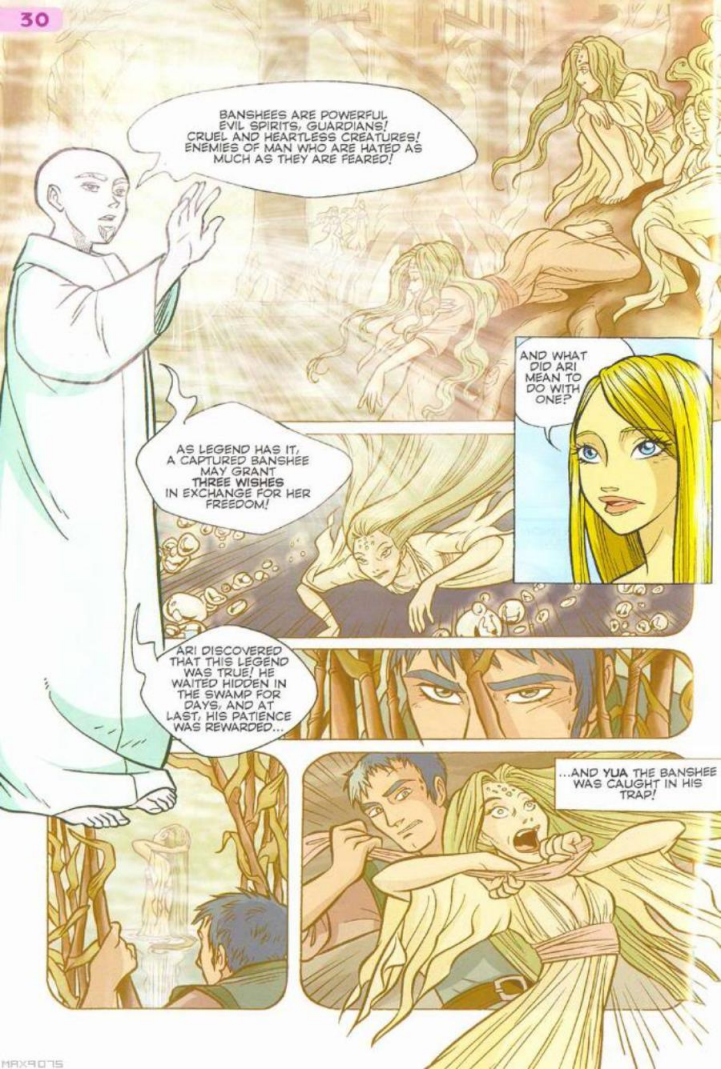
THAT'S TRUE! BUT SHE DOESN'T SEEM FRIENDLY TO ME!
HA! HA!
HA! HA! HA!

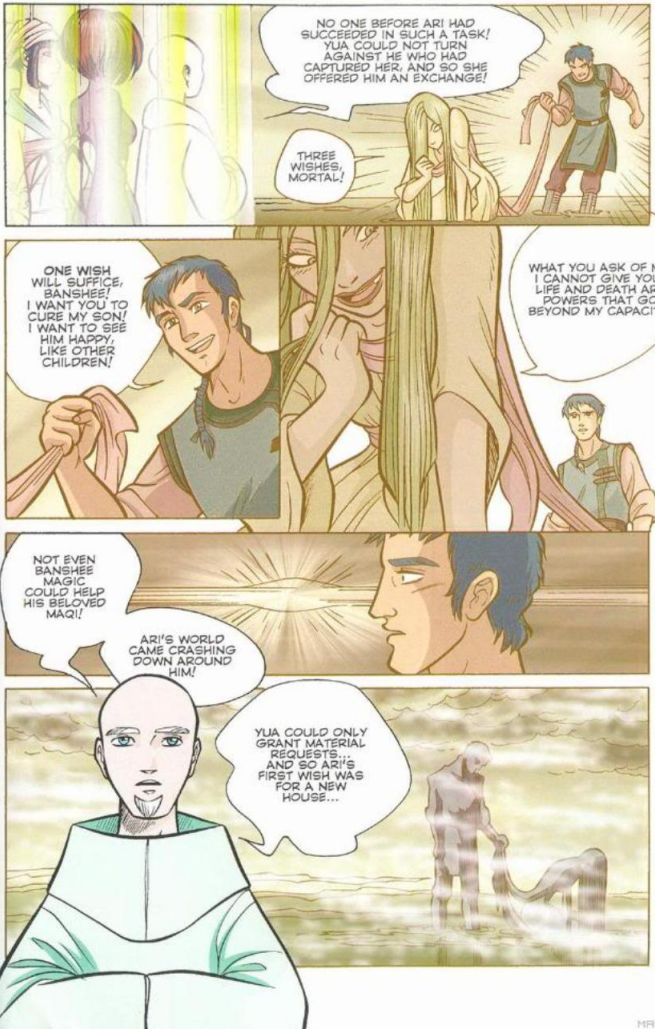
MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION FOR A MOMENT?

WHEN YOU WERE LAST HERE, I SPOKE TO YOU OF ARKHANTA...
...A PEACEFUL, HAPPY WORLD!

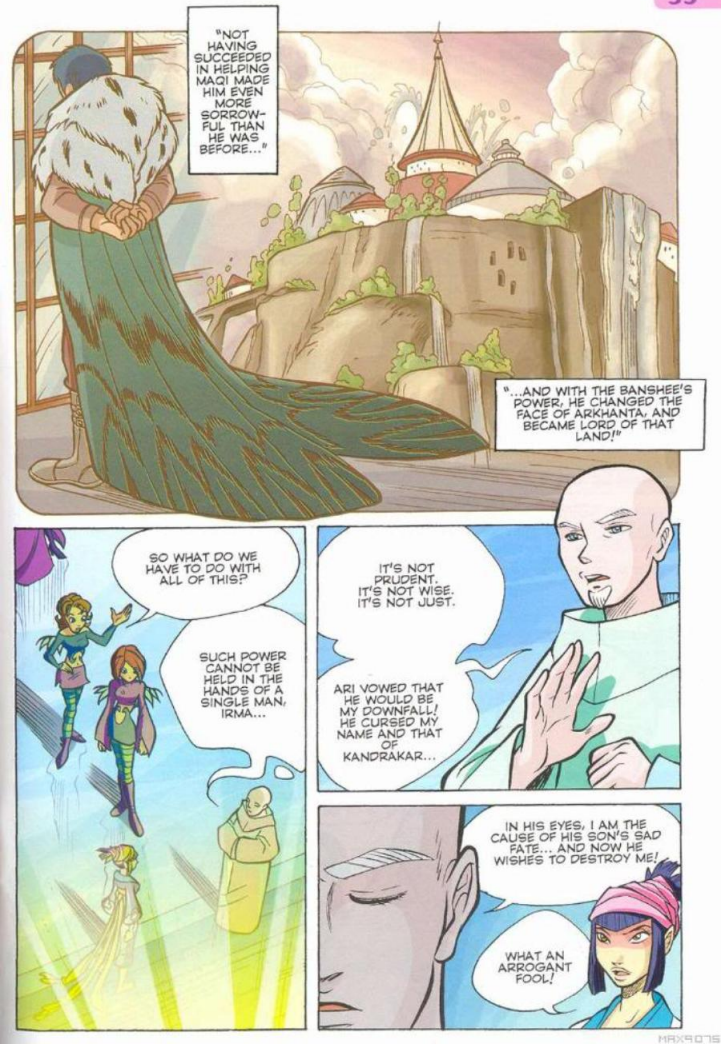

HERE LIVED ARI, A YOUNG FARMER! HE LIVED A DIFFICULT LIFE, ONE FILLED WITH LABOR AND TOILS!
"ARI HAD A WIFE, WHOM HE LOVED MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THE WORLD..."
"YET THE WOMAN DIED WHILE GIVING BIRTH TO MAQI, THEIR ONLY CHILD!"
"LITTLE MAQI WAS A STRONG, HEALTHY BABY... YET SOMETHING MADE HIM DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS!"
"SILENT AND SOLITARY, HE LIVED IN A WORLD OF HIS OWN, FAR FROM THAT OF OTHER CHILDREN..."
"...AND FAR FROM HIS FATHER!"
ARI TRIED EVERYTHING TO REMEDY MAQI'S AFFLICTION!

"HE ASKED FOR HELP FROM ARKHANTA'S WISEST MEN, SPOKE WITH PHYSICIANS AND SCHOLARS..."
...YET NONE OF THEM SUCCEEDED IN CURING MAQI! SCIENCE COULD DO NOTHING FOR ARI'S SON... AND SO, THE MAN DECIDED TO ATTEMPT THE IMPOSSIBLE...
HE DECIDED TO CAPTURE A BANSHEE!
OOH!
DO YOU KNOW WHAT A BANSHEE IS?
NOT REALLY!
SO WHY DID YOU SAY, "OOH!"?
WELL... IT SOUNDED LIKE THE MOMENT FOR A DRAMATIC TOUCH!
THIS CHICK'S REALLY GETTING ON MY NERVES!
WELL, SOMETIMES YOU'RE ASKING FOR IT, IRMA...


BANSHEES ARE POWERFUL EVIL SPIRITS, GUARDIANS! CRUEL AND HEARTLESS CREATURES! ENEMIES OF MAN WHO ARE HATED AS MUCH AS THEY ARE FEARED!
AND WHAT DID ARI MEAN TO DO WITH ONE?
AS LEGEND HAS IT, A CAPTURED BANSHEE MAY GRANT THREE WISHES IN EXCHANGE FOR HER FREEDOM!
ARI DISCOVERED THAT THIS LEGEND WAS TRUE! HE WAITED HIDDEN IN THE SWAMP FOR DAYS, AND AT LAST, HIS PATIENCE WAS REWARDED...
...AND YUA THE BANSHEE WAS CAUGHT IN HIS TRAP!


NO ONE BEFORE ARI HAD SUCCEEDED IN SUCH A TASK! YUA COULD NOT TURN AGAINST HE WHO HAD CAPTURED HER, AND SO SHE OFFERED HIM AN EXCHANGE!
THREE WISHES, MORTAL!
ONE WISH WILL SUFFICE, BANSHEE! I WANT YOU TO CURE MY SON! I WANT TO SEE HIM HAPPY, LIKE OTHER CHILDREN!
WHAT YOU ASK OF ME, I CANNOT GIVE YOU! LIFE AND DEATH ARE POWERS THAT GO BEYOND MY CAPACITY!
NOT EVEN BANSHEE MAGIC COULD HELP HIS BELOVED MAQI!
ARI'S WORLD CAME CRASHING DOWN AROUND HIM!
YUA COULD ONLY GRANT MATERIAL REQUESTS... AND SO ARI'S FIRST WISH WAS FOR A NEW HOUSE...

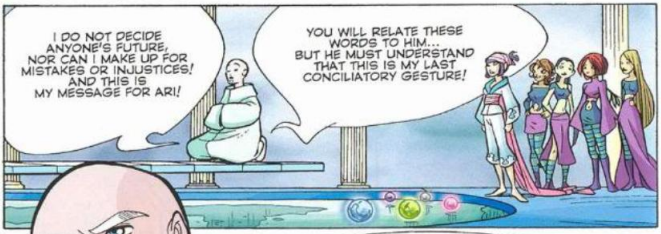
"...THE SCARLET CITADEL AN ENORMOUS, MARVELOUS PALACE IN WHICH MAQI COULD LEAD A TRANQUIL LIFE!"
HIS SECOND WISH WAS FOR IMMENSE RICHES... WEALTH SO VAST THAT MAQI WOULD HAVE EVERYTHING HE DESIRED...
AND HIS LAST WISH?
THE GREATEST ONE OF ALL...
...YOU WILL FOREVER BE AT MY SERVICE, TO GRANT MY EVERY WISH!
YOU... YOU TRICKED ME!
CURSED HUMAN! YOU TRICKED ME!
SILENCE YUA! SERVANTS DO NOT SPEAK TO THEIR MASTERS IN THIS WAY!
"SOMETHING WITHIN ARI SNAPPED. HE BECAME A DIFFERENT PERSON."


"NOT HAVING SUCCEEDED IN HELPING MAQI MADE HIM EVEN MORE SORROWFUL THAN HE WAS BEFORE..."
"...AND WITH THE BANSHEE'S POWER, HE CHANGED THE FACE OF ARKHANTA, AND BECAME LORD OF THAT LAND!"
SO WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO WITH ALL OF THIS?
SUCH POWER CANNOT BE HELD IN THE HANDS OF A SINGLE MAN, IRMA...
IT'S NOT PRUDENT. IT'S NOT WISE. IT'S NOT JUST.
ARI VOWED THAT HE WOULD BE MY DOWNFALL! HE CURSED MY NAME AND THAT OF KANDRAKAR...
IN HIS EYES, I AM THE CAUSE OF HIS SON'S SAD FATE... AND NOW HE WISHES TO DESTROY ME!
WHAT AN ARROGANT FOOL!

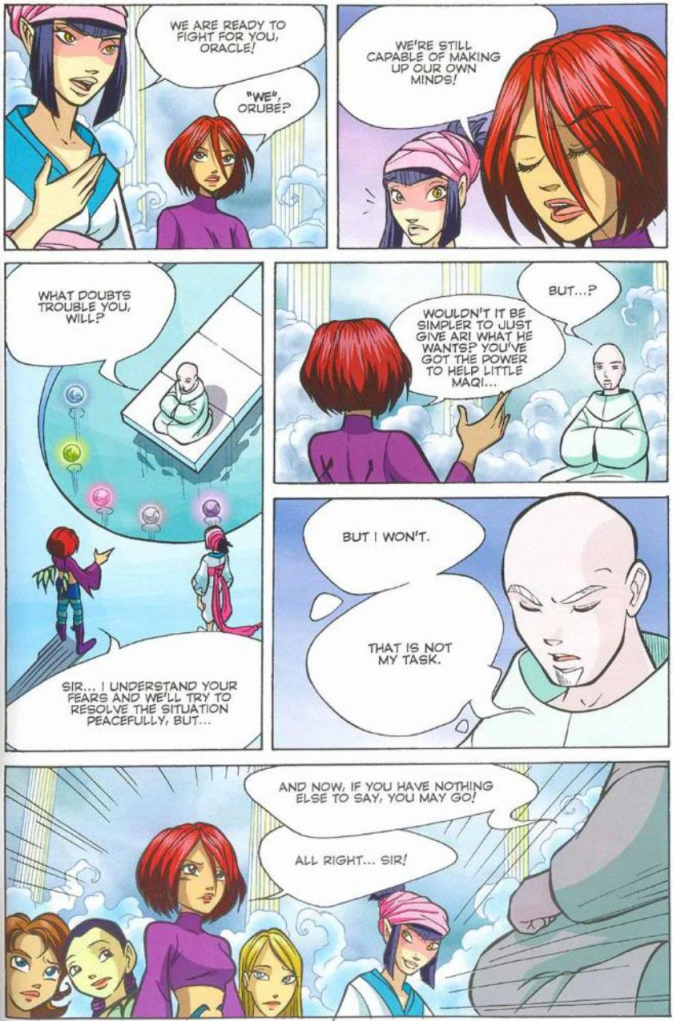
HE'S A DANGEROUS FOOL, ORUBE! HE HAS THE POWER TO ATTACK KANDRAKAR...

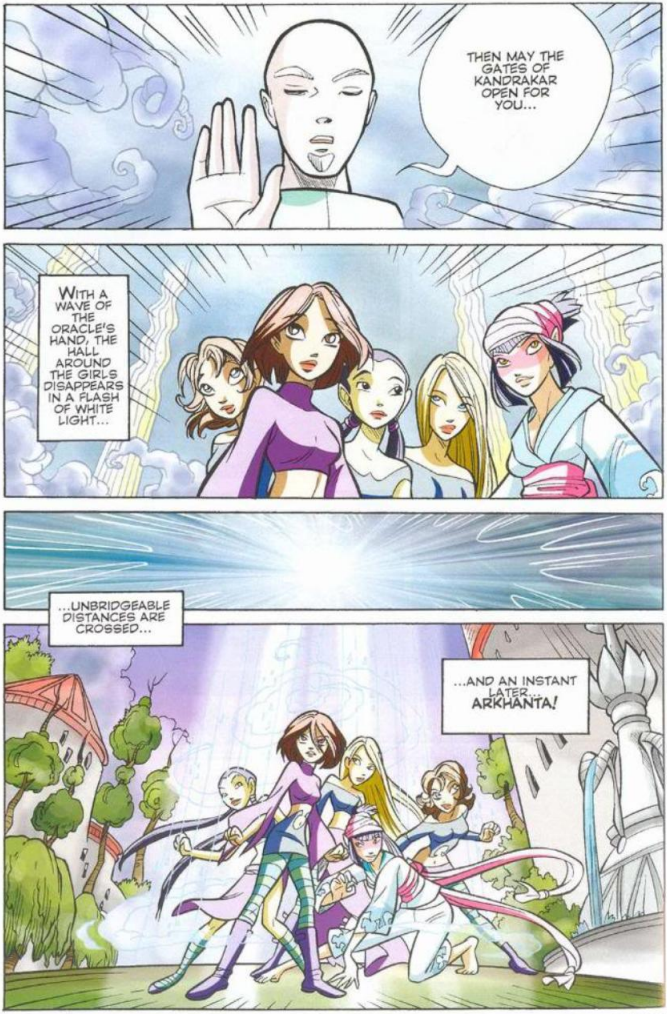
...AND YOU MUST KEEP THAT FROM HAPPENING! HIS POWER COULD DESTROY KANDRAKAR AND HIS ANGER MAKES HIM EVEN MORE POWERFUL!

IF ARI WERE ABLE TO LISTEN, HE WOULD HAVE KNOWN FOR SOME TIME THAT I WAS ONLY AN OBSERVER... A SIMPLE KEEPER OF THE BALANCE!

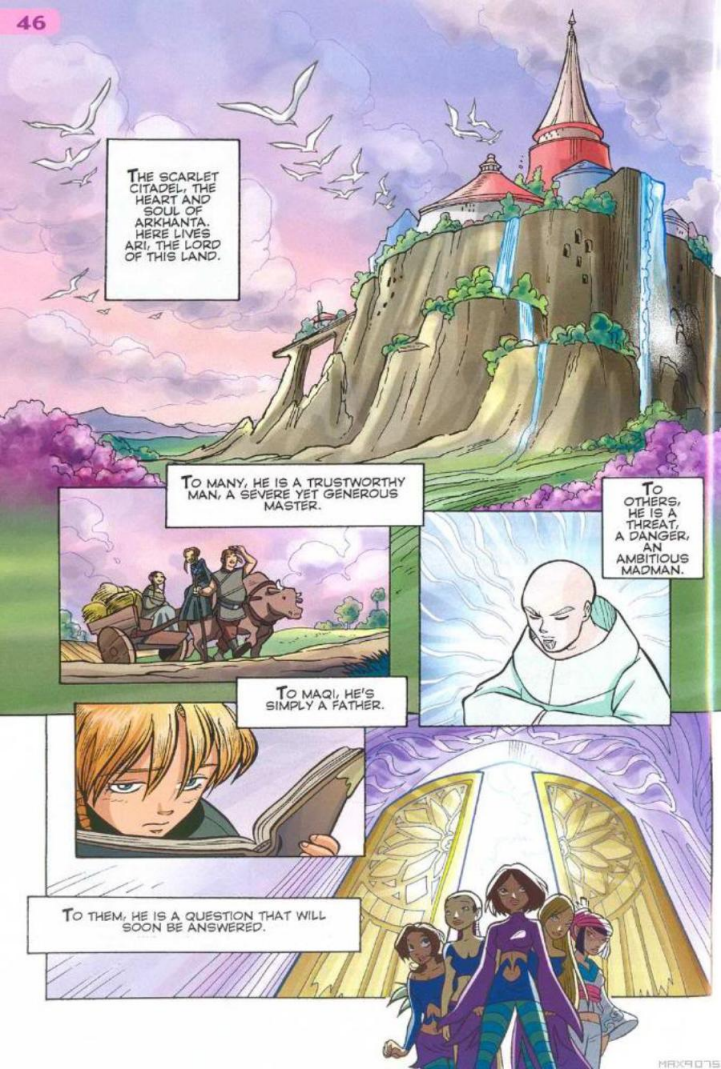

I DO NOT DECIDE ANYONE'S FUTURE, NOR CAN I MAKE UP FOR MISTAKES OR INJUSTICES! AND THIS IS MY MESSAGE FOR ARI!
YOU WILL RELATE THESE WORDS TO HIM... BUT HE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS MY LAST CONCILIATORY GESTURE!

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, ARI MUST FREE THE BANSHEE AND RENOUNCE HIS INTENTIONS! THIS IS THE WISH OF KANDRAKAR!


WE ARE READY TO FIGHT FOR YOU, ORACLE!
"WE", ORUBE?
WE'RE STILL CAPABLE OF MAKING UP OUR OWN MINDS!
WHAT DOUBTS TROUBLE YOU, WILL?
SIR... I UNDERSTAND YOUR FEARS AND WE'LL TRY TO RESOLVE THE SITUATION PEACEFULLY, BUT...
BUT...?
WOULDN'T IT BE SIMPLER TO JUST GIVE ARI WHAT HE WANTS? YOU'VE GOT THE POWER TO HELP LITTLE MAQI...
BUT I WON'T.
THAT IS NOT MY TASK.
AND NOW, IF YOU HAVE NOTHING ELSE TO SAY, YOU MAY GO!
ALL RIGHT... SIR!


THEN MAY THE GATES OF KANDRAKAR OPEN FOR YOU...
WITH A WAVE OF THE ORACLE'S HAND, THE HALL AROUND THE GIRLS DISAPPEARS IN A FLASH OF WHITE LIGHT...
...UNBRIDGEABLE DISTANCES ARE CROSSED...
...AND AN INSTANT LATER... ARKHANTA!

End of Part One.

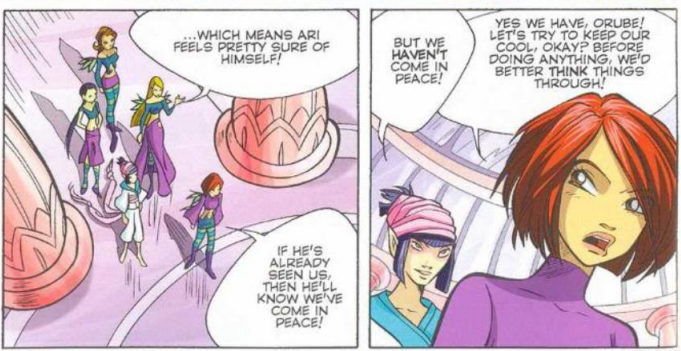

THE SCARLET CITADEL, THE HEART AND SOUL OF ARKHANTA. HERE LIVES ARI, THE LORD OF THIS LAND.
TO MANY, HE IS A TRUSTWORTHY MAN, A SEVERE YET GENEROUS MASTER.
TO OTHERS, HE IS A THREAT, A DANGER, AN AMBITIOUS MADMAN.
TO MAQI, HE'S SIMPLY A FATHER.
TO THEM, HE IS A QUESTION THAT WILL SOON BE ANSWERED.

SO THAT'S YOUR PLAN FOR FACING ARI?
WHAT PART DOESN'T CONVINCE YOU? IT'S SIMPLE, BUT EFFECTIVE!
WE GO IN, WE ASK HIM TO SURRENDER...
...AND IF WE DON'T LIKE HIS ANSWER, WE ROUGH HIM UP A BIT!
THIS IS ALL RIDICULOUS! WHY SHOULD IT WORK? WHY WOULD THAT MAN LISTEN TO US AFTER HAVING TURNED AWAY THE ORACLE'S AMBASSADORS?
BECAUSE WE'RE CUTER!
YOU SHOULD TAKE THINGS MORE SERIOUSLY, GIRL...
THE NAME'S IRMA...
AND MINE IS ORUBE!
NICE NAME... FOR A PUSSYCAT!
!

WE'RE NOT HERE TO FIGHT WITH EACH OTHER, BUT TO DEAL WITH ANOTHER PROBLEM!
I KNEW SHE WAS GOING TO SAY THAT! YOU HEAR HOW SHE'S TALKING LIKE A REAL BOSS?

AND IN ANY CASE, ORUBE'S RIGHT, IRMA!
OKAY... SO FORGET I SAID IT!
YOU SEE THAT? THERE'S SOMEBODY DOWN THERE! I BET HE'S RUNNING OFF TO WARN ARI!
THERE'S NO NEED TO BE ALARMED, HAY LIN! THE MAN OF THE HOUSE HAS KNOWN FOR A WHILE THAT WE'RE HERE!

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
TAKE A LOOK AROUND! THERE ISN'T A SINGLE SOLDIER GUARDING THE PLACE! THIS PALACE IS OPEN TO ANYONE WHO WALKS THROUGH THE DOOR...


...WHICH MEANS ARI FEELS PRETTY SURE OF HIMSELF!
IF HE'S ALREADY SEEN US, THEN HE'LL KNOW WE'VE COME IN PEACE!
BUT WE HAVEN'T COME IN PEACE!
YES WE HAVE, ORUBE! LET'S TRY TO KEEP OUR COOL, OKAY? BEFORE DOING ANYTHING, WE'D BETTER THINK THINGS THROUGH!

!
?
AN EXCELLENT SUGGESTION, STRANGERS!
IT'S ARI!
YOU KNOW MY NAME, I SEE... YET I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT YOU!
THIS PUTS ME AT A DISADVANTAGE, WHICH LEAVES ME NO CHOICE BUT TO DEFEND MYSELF!
WE'RE THE GUARDIANS OF KANDRAKAR, SIR...
...AND WE'RE HERE TO SPEAK WITH YOU!
KANDRAKAR!
YOU'RE VERY YOUNG! SO THE ORACLE NOW HIDES BEHIND LITTLE GIRLS...
DON'T LET APPEARANCES FOOL YOU!
IT WAS BRAVE OF YOU TO TRAVEL ALL THE WAY HERE... BUT YOUR JOURNEY HAS BEEN MADE IN VAIN!
I'VE ALREADY SAID EVERYTHING I HAVE TO SAY TO YOUR MASTER!
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR SON...

DON'T SPEAK ABOUT MY SON! YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT HIM! ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!
YOUR ORACLE HAS DONE NOTHING FOR MY LITTLE BOY!
HE TURNED A DEAF EAR TO MY EVERY PLEA...
...HE NEVER ANSWERED MY CALLS FOR HELP!
SO THEN, WITH WHAT RIGHT DOES HE CLAIM TO BE THE WISEST OF THE WISE? THE GREATEST OF THE GREAT?
WITH WHAT RIGHT DOES HE DEMAND TO BE RESPECTED?

THE ORACLE ISN'T WORTHY TO SIT ON THE HIGHEST THRONE OF KANDRAKAR...
...WHICH IS WHY I WILL DRAG HIM THROUGH THE DUST! I HAVE THE POWER TO DO IT... AND YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT I WILL!
NOW, LEAVE THIS PLACE... AND CONSIDER YOURSELVES LUCKY THAT YOU CAN DO SO WALKING!
WELL... YOU MADE YOUR MOVE! SO NOW WHAT?
YEAH... NOW WHAT?
NOW, THE MOMENT FOR TALKING IS OVER!
TURN AND FACE ME, ARI OF ARKHANTA!
?

NO!

SHRAAAAK

YOU... YOU DON'T REALIZE WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
ARE YOU CRAZY? ARE YOU ABSOLUTELY CRAZY?

IT IS FOOLISH TO CHALLENGE ME, BUT YOU HAVE MADE YOUR DECISION...
...AND NOW YOU WILL FACE THE CONSEQUENCES!
YOA!
WIMI!

I'M LISTENING, MASTER...
GET RID OF THESE INTRUDERS, SPIRIT! REMOVE THEM FROM MY SIGHT!
IT'S THE BANSHEE!
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE IN TROUBLE! LET'S CLEAR OUT!
RETREAT, GUYS! OUT OF HERE! OUT OF HERE!
...AND TAKE THEM WHERE THEY CAN NEVER RETURN!
YOUR WISH WILL BE GRANTED, MASTER...
...IMMEDIATELY!
?
?

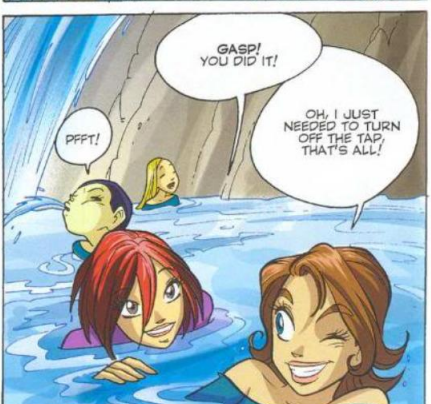
NGHHH...
!
I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE...
KZZZZZZZZZH
!
GASP! PANT...
AHHHH... AIR!
!... I CAN BREATHE!
WE HAVE TO GET BACK TO THE SURFACE, AND FAST!
IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY!
THERE'S A REALLY STRONG CURRENT PUSHING US BACK DOWN...

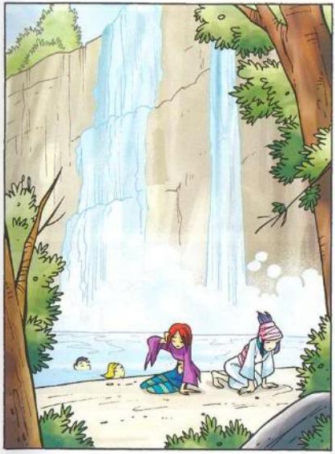
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT! WE'RE IN MY ELEMENT NOW! EVERYBODY HOLD HANDS...
I HOPE I DIDN'T SPEAK TOO SOON! THE CURRENT'S REALLY STRONG... BUT I'VE GOT TO DO IT!
IRMA...
FASTER, IRMA! FASTER...
WE'RE ALMOST THERE...
AAAH!

BRRRRRRRUUUUUUMBLE

ZWING
ARI AND THE BANSHEE HAVE PROVEN THEIR SKILL WITH SPELLS, BUT I'VE GOT A FEW TRICKS UP MY SLEEVE, TOO...

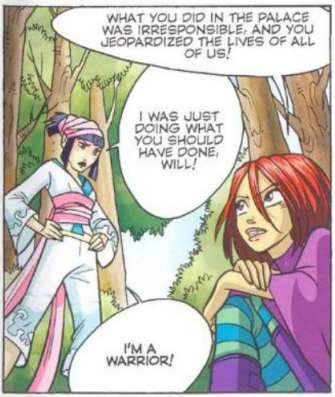
STOP!


GASP! YOU DID IT!
PFFT!
OH, I JUST NEEDED TO TURN OFF THE TAP, THAT'S ALL!

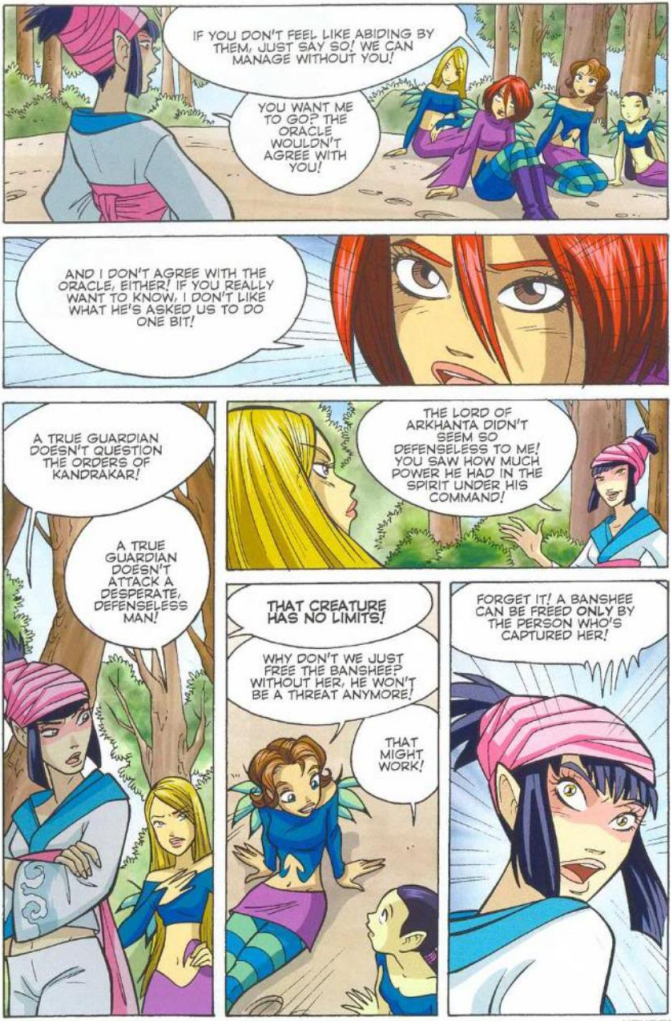


ORUBE...
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

!
DON'T TRY TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT EVER AGAIN!


WHAT YOU DID IN THE PALACE WAS IRRESPONSIBLE, AND YOU JEOPARDIZED THE LIVES OF ALL OF US!
I WAS JUST DOING WHAT YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE, WILL!
I'M A WARRIOR!

YOU CAN BE WHOEVER YOU WANT, BUT YOU'RE PART OF A GROUP NOW! AND THIS GROUP HAS RULES!


IF YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE ABIDING BY THEM, JUST SAY SO! WE CAN MANAGE WITHOUT YOU!
YOU WANT ME TO GO? THE ORACLE WOULDN'T AGREE WITH YOU!
AND I DON'T AGREE WITH THE ORACLE, EITHER! IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW, I DON'T LIKE WHAT HE'S ASKED US TO DO ONE BIT!
A TRUE GUARDIAN DOESN'T QUESTION THE ORDERS OF KANDRAKAR!
A TRUE GUARDIAN DOESN'T ATTACK A DESPERATE, DEFENSELESS MAN!
THE LORD OF ARKHANTA DIDN'T SEEM SO DEFENSELESS TO ME! YOU SAW HOW MUCH POWER HE HAD IN THE SPIRIT UNDER HIS COMMAND!
THAT CREATURE HAS NO LIMITS!
WHY DON'T WE JUST FREE THE BANSHEEP WITHOUT HER, HE WON'T BE A THREAT ANYMORE!
THAT MIGHT WORK!
FORGET IT! A BANSHEE CAN BE FREED ONLY BY THE PERSON WHO'S CAPTURED HER!

YUA CAN'T CHANGE THAT LAW... AND NEITHER CAN WE! YOU HAVE TO COME UP WITH ANOTHER PLAN!
FRUSH
CRUNC

!

COME HERE, PADJA! STAY AWAY FROM THEM!
DON'T BE AFRAID!

YOU DON'T COME IN PEACE! I... I HEARD YOUR WORDS! YOU INTEND TO HARM ARI!
YOU CANNOT UNDER-STAND, WOMAN...
EVERYTHING THERE IS TO UNDERSTAND IS RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES, STRANGER! THIS PLACE WAS A BARREN WASTELAND UNTIL NOT SO LONG AGO...
...BUT ARI MADE IT BEAUTIFUL! HE'S A GENEROUS AND COURAGEOUS LORD! HE TRANSFORMED THE EVIL SPIRIT INTO A CREATURE OF GOOD!

ARI NEVER FORGOT THAT HE WAS ONCE A FARMER TOO! HE NEVER FORGETS PEOPLE WHO SUFFER, BECAUSE HE TOO, ONCE SUFFERED GREATLY...
...AND IF THIS WORLD IS A PROSPEROUS, HAPPY PLACE TODAY, IT'S ALL THANKS TO HIM! WHY DO YOU WANT TO ATTACK HIM?
WHY?
YOU WANT TO ANSWER THAT ONE, ORUBE?
NO, IRMA! NO ARGUING! I THINK WE SHOULD GO BACK TO THE SCARLET CITADEL! ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, ARI'S GOING TO LISTEN TO US!
YOU WANT TO GO BACK UP THERE? ARI'S GOING TO KICK OUR BUTTS ALL OVER AGAIN!
WE CAN'T GO BACK INTO BATTLE WITHOUT A PLAN!
WE DON'T NEED A PLAN! I JUST WANT TO TALK!
TALKING WILL GET US NOWHERE! WE HAVE TO FIGHT! LAST TIME HE CAUGHT US OFF GUARD!

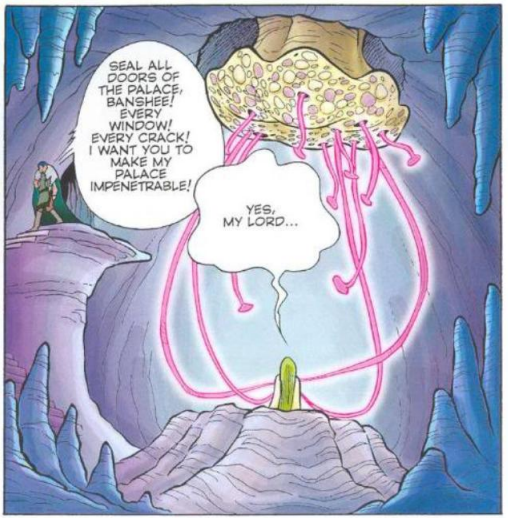
HOW ARE WE GOING TO FIND THE PALACE? WE DON'T KNOW WHAT PART OF ARKHANTA WE'VE ENDED UP IN!
THE HEART OF KANDRAKAR ALWAYS KNOWS THE PATH, CORNELIA...

TO THE SCARLET CITADEL, THEN...

SHA-Z-ZZAK
DAMNATION! THEM AGAIN!

I THOUGHT I'D RID MYSELF OF THEM FOREVER, YUA!
I'M LISTENING, MASTER!

WHAT HAPPENED? WHY ARE THE GUARDIANS OF KANDRAKAR STILL HERE?
THOSE GIRLS ARE STRONGER THAN I THOUGHT, SIRE...


SEAL ALL DOORS OF THE PALACE, BANSHEE! EVERY WINDOW! EVERY CRACK! I WANT YOU TO MAKE MY PALACE IMPENETRABLE!
YES, MY LORD...

WELL, HERE WE ARE! LET'S REMEMBER THAT WE'RE HERE TO TALK AND NOT TO FIGHT...

OH!

AND NOW, BANSHEE... DESTROY THE ORACLE'S EMISSARIES! BRING YOUR NIGHTMARES TO LIFE...

...AND DO NOT DISAPPOINT ME AGAIN!
PLIT
PLIT
AS ALWAYS, YOUR WISH WILL BE GRANTED, MY LORD...
WHAT LOUSY HOSPITALITY! HE SAW US COMING, AND THIS IS THE WELCOME HE GIVES US!
STOP COMPLAINING! HE COULD'VE DONE A LOT WORSE THAN THIS!
BROOOOOM
MAYBE THAT'S JUST WHAT HE'S DOING!
EYES OPEN, GIRLS! I DON'T LIKE THIS SITUATION...
YOU'RE TELLING ME!
NNNN RR RAY

ARI! COME OUT AND LISTEN TO US!
THEY'RE STILL HERE, YUA...
NOT FOR LONG, SIRE...
THE POWER OF FIRE WILL DESTROY THEM!
"...AN ICY FLAME THAT BURNS LIFE ITSELF!"
!
Ssshhhhhhhh
BACK! STAY BACK!
WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF? IT'S ONLY FIRE!
NO, ORUBE! IT'S SOMETHING MUCH MORE DANGEROUS...

...THESE FLAMES ARE ALIVE AND THEY'RE OUT TO GET US!
AIEEE

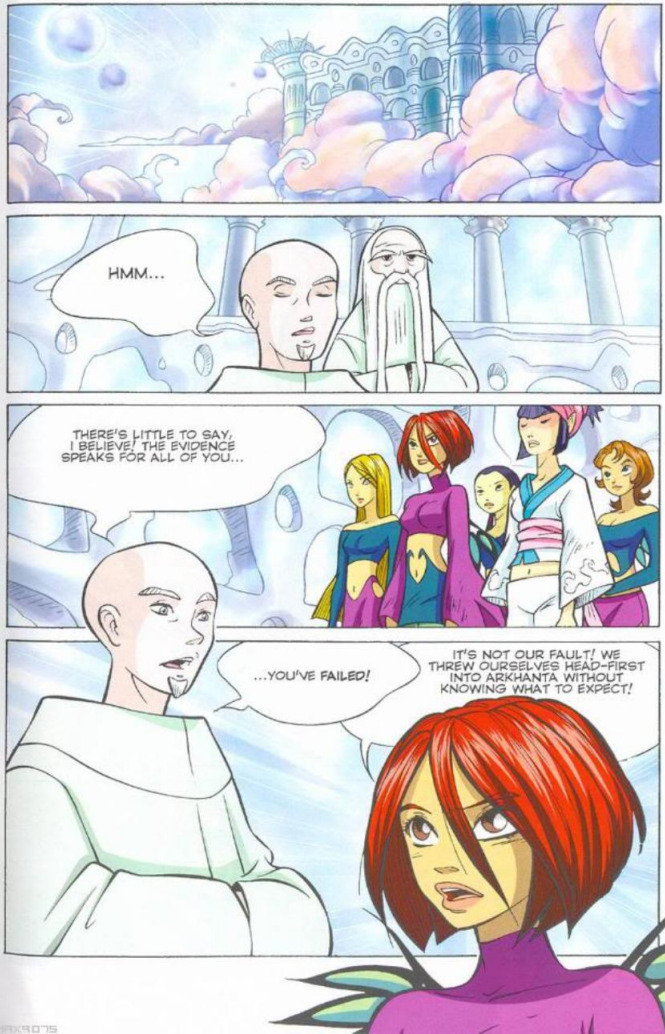
I'M NOT AFRAID OF BEING BURNT, CORNELIA!
WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE, AND YOU'RE COMING WITH US!

A TRUE WARRIOR NEVER ABANDONS THE BATTLE!
AN INTELLIGENT WARRIOR GETS BACK HOME ALL IN ONE PIECE!

THE ORACLE SAID SHE WAS LUBA'S BEST PUPIL!
MAYBE SHE WAS ALONE IN HER CLASS...

WE'VE WASTED TOO MUCH TIME! WE'RE SURROUNDED!
WE HAVE NO CHOICE, THEN...

...WE'RE GOING BACK TO KANDRAKAR!
SHAWAAA


HMM...
THERE'S LITTLE TO SAY, I BELIEVE! THE EVIDENCE SPEAKS FOR ALL OF YOU...
...YOU'VE FAILED!
IT'S NOT OUR FAULT! WE THREW OURSELVES HEAD-FIRST INTO ARKHANTA WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT!

NOW YOU KNOW... BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT YOU DIDN'T ACT AS A TEAM!
DON'T TELL THAT TO US, SIR!

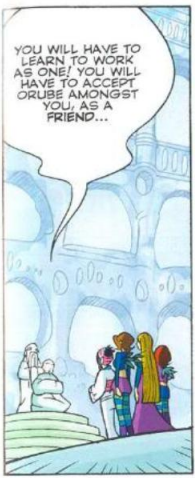
SHE'S RIGHT! ORUBE RUINED EVERYTHING RIGHT FROM THE START!
LIAR! YOU WERE THE ONES WHO REJECTED ME!

THAT'S ENOUGH! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR SUCH ARGUMENTS IN THIS PLACE OF HARMONY!

ARI IS A COMPLEX ADVERSARY, BUT I'M CERTAIN...
...THAT YOU'LL FIND THE BEST WAY TO OVERCOME THIS OBSTACLE!
IF "SANTA CLAUS" IS SO CONFIDENT, THEN WE SHOULDN'T BE WORRIED, EITHER...

YOU WILL RETURN TO ARKHANTA ONCE AGAIN! YOU WILL NOT FAIL IN YOUR DUTY...

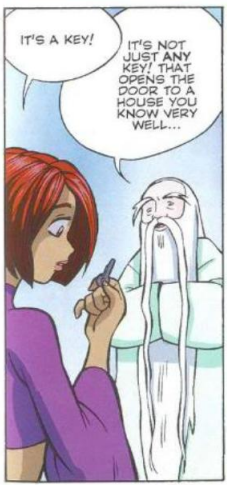
...YET YOU WILL SUCCEED IN YOUR MISSION ONLY IF YOU PUT ASIDE YOUR QUARRELING... AND YOUR APPREHENSIONS!

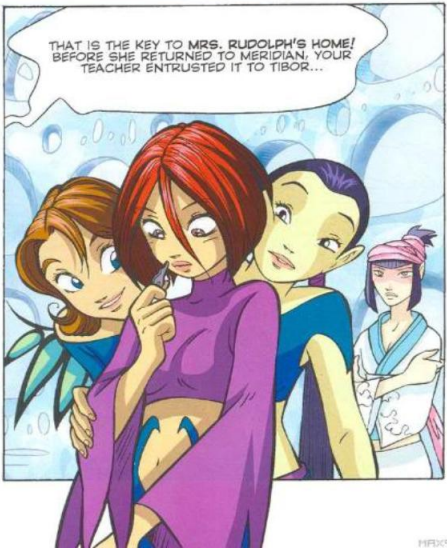

YOU WILL HAVE TO LEARN TO WORK AS ONE! YOU WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT ORUBE AMONGST YOU, AS A FRIEND...

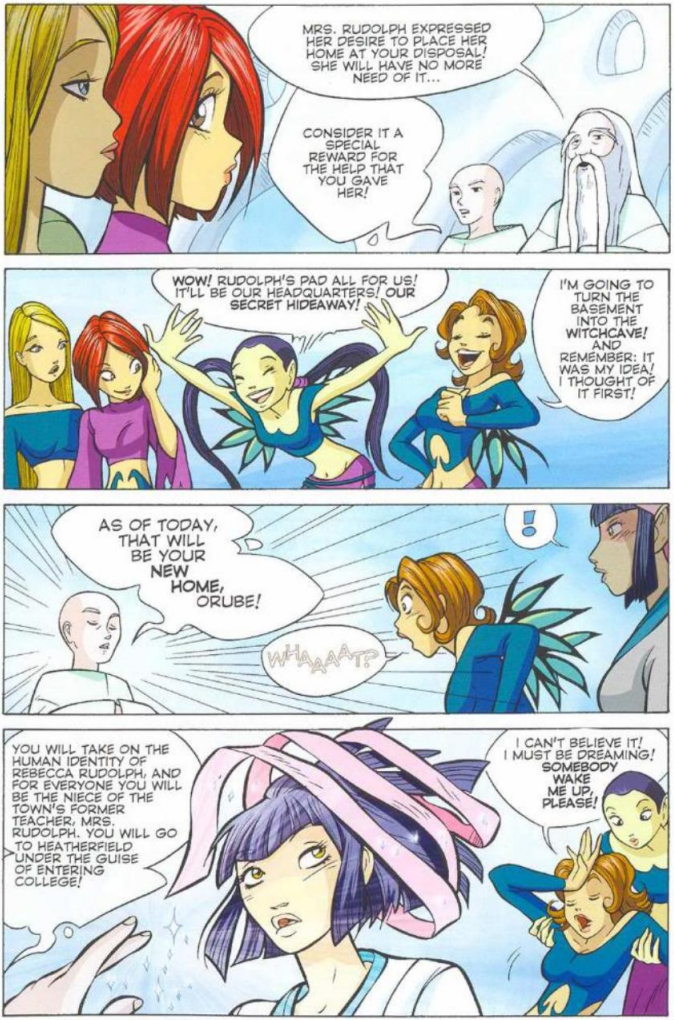
...AND YOU, ORUBE, WILL HAVE TO MAKE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT, CONQUERING YOUR DOUBTS AND RESENTMENTS!
I WILL DO SO, ORACLE!

YOU MUST GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER... AND I KNOW HOW YOU WILL SUCCEED IN DOING SO...

HERE!

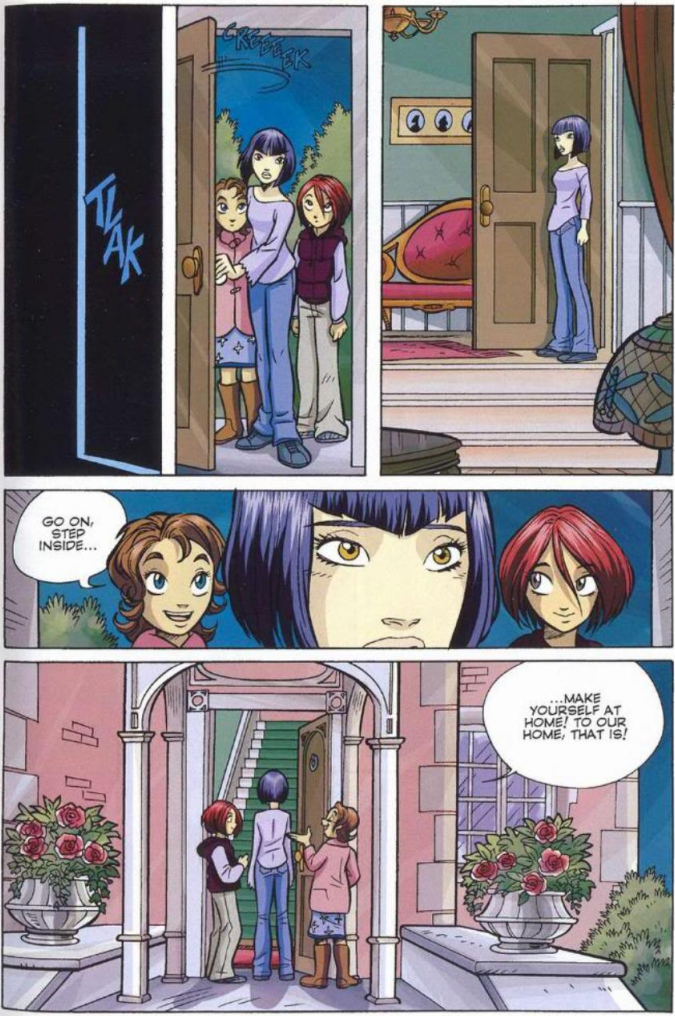

IT'S A KEY!
IT'S NOT JUST ANY KEY! THAT OPENS THE DOOR TO A HOUSE YOU KNOW VERY WELL...

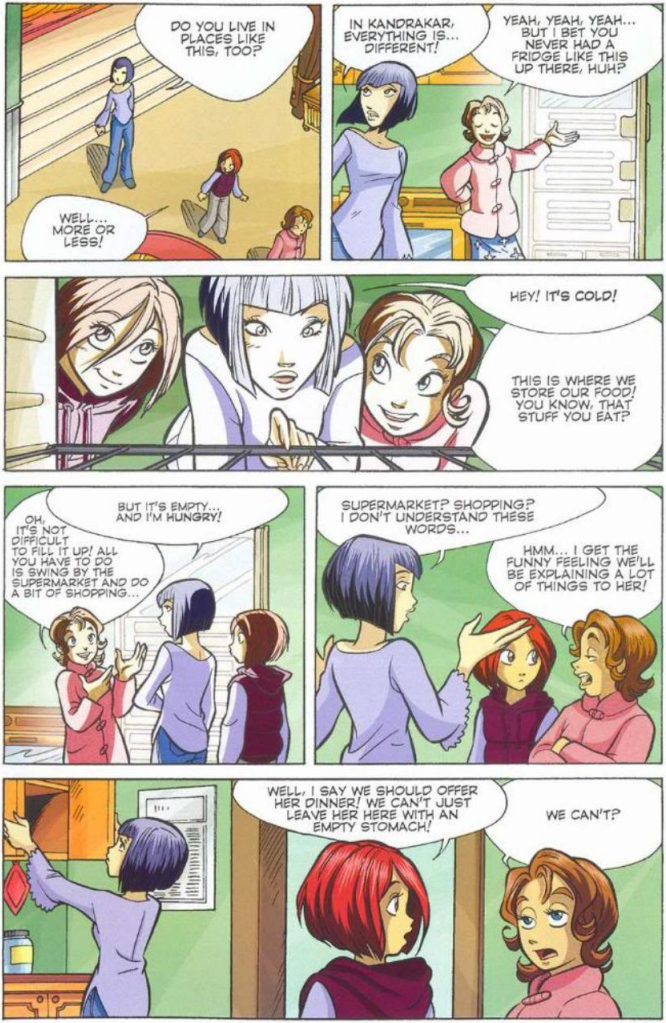

THAT IS THE KEY TO MRS. RUDOLPH'S HOME! BEFORE SHE RETURNED TO MERIDIAN, YOUR TEACHER ENTRUSTED IT TO TIBOR...


MRS. RUDOLPH EXPRESSED HER DESIRE TO PLACE HER HOME AT YOUR DISPOSAL! SHE WILL HAVE NO MORE NEED OF IT...
CONSIDER IT A SPECIAL REWARD FOR THE HELP THAT YOU GAVE HER!
WOW! RUDOLPH'S PAD ALL FOR US! IT'LL BE OUR HEADQUARTERS! OUR SECRET HIDEAWAY!
I'M GOING TO TURN THE BASEMENT INTO THE WITCHCAVE! AND REMEMBER: IT WAS MY IDEA! I THOUGHT OF IT FIRST!
AS OF TODAY, THAT WILL BE YOUR NEW HOME, ORUBE!
!
WHAAAT?
YOU WILL TAKE ON THE HUMAN IDENTITY OF REBECCA RUDOLPH, AND FOR EVERYONE YOU WILL BE THE NIECE OF THE TOWN'S FORMER TEACHER, MRS. RUDOLPH. YOU WILL GO TO HEATHERFIELD UNDER THE GUISE OF ENTERING COLLEGE!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! I MUST BE DREAMING! SOMEBODY WAKE ME UP, PLEASE!

BUT WHY, SIR? I'VE ALWAYS LIVED VERY HAPPILY HERE IN KANDRAKAR!
LIVING IN THE WORLD CALLED EARTH WILL HELP YOU TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HUMANS...
...AND YOU GIRLS WILL BE THERE BESIDE HER!
BUT IT'S NOT FAIR! THAT'S OUR HOUSE!
SHE SHOULD AT LEAST PAY RENT!
WELL, ORUBE?

REDSTONE...
SHA- WAAAM
I CAN'T WAIT TO TELL TARANEE EVERYTHING! I BET SHE'S DYING OF CURIOSITY!
NOT SO LOUD! SHE'S SLEEPING!
SO I'LL WAKE HER UP!
COME ON, HAY LIN! LEAVE HER ALONE! IT'S ALREADY LATE! CAN'T YOU WAIT TILL TOMORROW?


TLAK
CREEEAK
GO ON, STEP INSIDE...
...MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME! TO OUR HOME, THAT IS!


DO YOU LIVE IN PLACES LIKE THIS, TOO?
WELL... MORE OR LESS!
IN KANDRAKAR, EVERYTHING IS... DIFFERENT!
YEAH, YEAH, YEAH... BUT I BET YOU NEVER HAD A FRIDGE LIKE THIS UP THERE, HUH?
HEY! IT'S COLD!
THIS IS WHERE WE STORE OUR FOOD! YOU KNOW, THAT STUFF YOU EAT?
BUT IT'S EMPTY... AND I'M HUNGRY!
OH, IT'S NOT DIFFICULT TO FILL IT UP! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SWING BY THE SUPERMARKET AND DO A BIT OF SHOPPING...
SUPERMARKET? SHOPPING? I DON'T UNDERSTAND THESE WORDS...
HMM... I GET THE FUNNY FEELING WE'LL BE EXPLAINING A LOT OF THINGS TO HER!
WELL, I SAY WE SHOULD OFFER HER DINNER! WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE HER HERE WITH AN EMPTY STOMACH!
WE CAN'T?

HERE, ORUBE... I'VE ONLY GOT THESE! IT'S NOT MUCH, BUT...
STRAP
CHOMP CHOMP CHOMP
THEY DON'T TASTE VERY GOOD!
I THINK I'LL EAT THE REST OF IT LATER ON!
HELLO? PIZZAFLASH? I'D LIKE TO PLACE AN ORDER...
YOU'LL SEE, ORUBE! IT'S NOT SO DIFFICULT...
End of Episode.